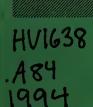
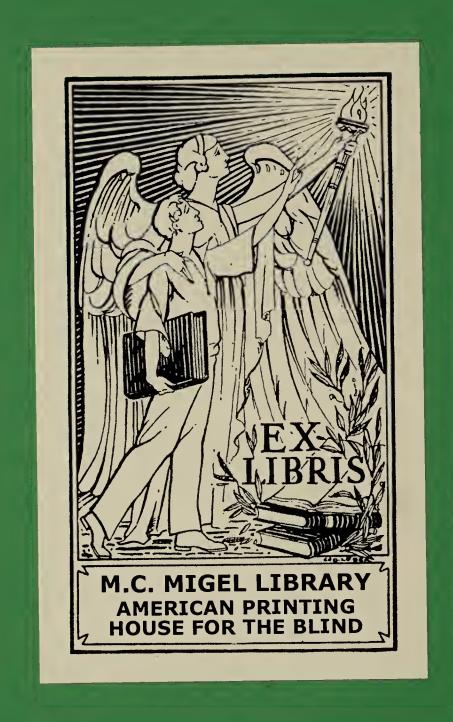
South Carolina Assessment for Determining Appropriate Literacy Media and for Evaluating Braille Skills



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South Carolina Department of Education

1429 Senate Street Columbia, South Carolina 29201

Luther W. Seabrook, Ed.D.

Senior Executive Assistant
Division of Curriculum and Instruction

Ora Spann, Ph.D.

Director
Office of Programs for Exceptional Children

William Chaiken, Ph.D.

Director Office of Technical Assistance

Suzanne Swaffield, M.Ed.

Education Associate
Office of Technical Assistance

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Special thanks to Patrice Holliday and Linda Usilton for their diligence and patience in typing the many revisions of this document.

Preface

The Blind Persons' Literacy Rights and Education Act of 1992 provides for the assessment of legally blind students relative to appropriate literacy media and the need for braille instruction and mandates the South Carolina Department of Education to develop an instrument to accomplish this purpose. The intent of this legislation is to ensure that all legally blind students, regardless of the ability to read print, have the opportunity to receive braille instruction as part of their special education program. The purpose of the legislation is to highlight the need to consider braille as a viable literacy medium of equal value.

The legislation defines the students to be assessed, as blind students who are eligible for special education and who meet the visual criteria set forth in the definition of legal blindness; or who have a medically indicated expectation of visual deterioration. Hereafter, individuals meeting this criteria, will be referred to as "student."

The focus of the assessment is to determine, on an individual basis, the reading and writing media that will provide the greatest means of literacy for each student. In line with the South Carolina Department of Education's commitment to excellence and equity for all students, the assessment instrument was developed to serve as the basis for determining the literacy media that will meet both current and future needs. The assessment protocol provides teachers with a means for organizing the information that has been determined essential to making this decision.

In order to ensure that the assessment is comprehensive, a Task Force comprised of parents, consumers, teachers, administrators, and agency personnel was named by Dr. Barbara S. Nielsen, State Superintendent of Education, to provide input to the Department of Education. The Task Force met throughout the 1992-93 school year and provided recommendations relative to essential elements to be included in the assessment instrument. The Assessment Protocol was field tested by fifteen (15) teachers of visually impaired students during the Fall of 1993. The South Carolina Assessment for Determining Appropriate Literacy Media and for Evaluating Braille Skills is the synthesis of the ideas and recommendations from the Task Force and the feedback from the teachers who field tested the document.

Task Force

MEMBERS

Dr. Julia Ashley

Parent, Legislative Committee Chair S. C. Chapter, National Association of Parents of Visually Impaired

Ms. Beulah Flynn-Brazzell

American Council of the Blind

Dr. Dennis Cates

Assistant Professor University of South Carolina

Mr. Parnell Diggs

National Federation of the Blind

Ms. Maronee Janes

Teacher of Students with Visual Disabilities Georgetown County Schools

Ms. Jan Lichtenstein

Coordinator of Programs for Orthopedically and Visually Impaired
Charleston County School District

Ms. Linda Mackechnie

Principal
South Carolina School for the Blind

Ms. Elizabeth McKown

South Carolina Commission for the Blind and S.C. Chapter AER

Mr. Dan Powell

Director of Outreach Programs South Carolina School for the Blind

Ms. Mary Powers

Teacher of Students with Visual Disabilities Richland School District One

Ms. Terri Randolph

Braille Teacher South Carolina School for the Blind

Ms. Debra Reames

Teacher of Students with Visual Disabilities Berkeley County School District

Ms. Catherine Williams

Parent, Member of Advisory Council Programs for Exceptional Children

FACILITATOR

Dr. Carol Massanari

Mid South Regional Resource Center University of Kentucky

S.C. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

Ms. Elizabeth Jones

Education Associate
Office of Student
Performance and Assessment

Ms. Suzanne Swaffield

Education Associate
Office of Technical Assistance

Field Test Sites

Elizabeth C. Cross

Greenville County Schools

Bonnie L. Hayes

Aiken County Schools

Denise Hyman

Aiken County Schools

Maronee F. Janes

Georgetown County Schools

Kevin Lamm

Horry County Schools

Chalma Lindler

Barnwell School District #45

Donna Martin

Charleston County Schools

Judy Moedinger

Lexington School District #1

Nancy Nelson

School District of Lexington and Richland Counties

Jill Nyland

Greenville County Schools

Georgia W. Pearson

Williamsburg County Schools

Mary Powers

Richland School District #1

Debra C. Reames

Berkeley County Schools

Gretchen Schroder

Project SHARE

Pamela B. Thornton

Aiken County Schools

Braille Bill

As a result of concerns of consumer organizations and others that some students who could benefit from braille instruction were not receiving it, braille bills have been introduced in various state legislatures during the past several years. In response to this concern, the South Carolina General Assembly enacted the Blind Persons' Literacy Rights and Education Act in March of 1992. The major provisions of the bill are outlined below:

- 1. Requirement to adopt program approval standards for certification in the area of vision to ensure that teachers who are certificated in visual impairment receive appropriate training and can demonstrate competence in reading and writing braille. (Section 59-26-20 (1))
- 2. Requirement that each legally blind student is identified and offered an Individualized Education Program (IEP).
- 3. Requirement that the Department of Education develop an assessment for determining the most appropriate reading and writing media and for evaluating braille skills including strengths and deficits.
- 4. Requirement that each legally blind student is assessed to determine the need for braille skills.
- 5. Requirement that if it is determined that braille instruction or use is not required, a statement must be included in the IEP relative to the basis for the determination. Additionally, the statement must specify that the absence of braille instruction or use will not impair the student's ability to read and write effectively.
- 6. Requirement that the IEP for those students receiving braille instruction must include the following:
 - the results of the evaluation of braille skills;
 - how braille will be implemented as the primary mode for learning through integration with other classroom activities;
 - the date on which braille instruction will commence:
 - the length of the period of instruction and the frequency and duration of each instructional session:
 - the level of competency in braille reading and writing to be achieved by the end of the period and the objective assessment measures to be used.

This is a summary of the major requirements of the legislation relative to braille assessment and instruction. Please refer to page vi for the entire text of the Act.(R299, H3559)

AN ACT TO AMEND SECTION 59-26-20, AS AMENDED, CODE OF LAWS OF SOUTH CAROLINA, 1976, RELATING TO DUTIES OF THE STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION AND COMMISSION ON HIGHER EDUCATION, SO AS TO INCLUDE THAT PROGRAM APPROVAL STANDARDS FOR INITIAL CERTIFICATION AND APPROVED PROGRAM OF COURSE REQUIREMENTS FOR ADDING CERTIFICATION FOR SPECIAL EDUCATION IN THE AREA OF VISION ENSURE THAT STUDENTS DEMONSTRATE COMPETENCE IN READING AND WRITING BRAILLE; AND TO AMEND TITLE 59, RELATING TO EDUCATION, BY ADDING CHAPTER 34 SO AS TO ENACT THE BLIND PERSONS' LITERACY RIGHTS AND EDUCATION ACT.

Be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of South Carolina:

Duties

SECTION 1. Section 59-26-20(1) of the 1976 Code is amended to read:

(1) "For special education in the area of vision, adopt program approval standards for initial certification and amend the approved program of specific course requirements for adding certification so that students receive appropriate training and can demonstrate competence in reading and writing braille."

Blind Persons' Literacy Rights and Education Act

SECTION 2. Title 59 of the 1976 Code is amended by adding:

CHAPTER 34

Blind Persons' Literacy Rights and Education

Section 59-34-10. This chapter may be cited as the Blind Persons' Literacy Rights and Education Act.

Section 59-34-20. As used in this chapter:

- (1) Blind student' means an individual who is eligible for special education services and who:
 - (a)has a visual acuity of 20/200 or less in the better eye with correcting lenses or has a limited field of vision such that the widest diameter subtends an angular distance of no greater than twenty degrees; or
 - (b)has a medically indicated expectation of visual deterioration.
- (2)'Braille' means the system of reading and writing through touch commonly known as standard English Braille.

(3)'Individualized education program' means a written statement developed for a student eligible for special education services pursuant to Section 602(a)(20) of Part A of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act, 20 U.S.C. Section 1401(a).

Section 59-34-30. Each legally blind student must be identified and offered an individualized education program (IEP) in consultation with a parent or legal guardian. While braille is not required, it is presumed that the need for braille reading and writing are valuable skills to be considered in the student's transition plan toward continuing in higher education and in broadening job and career opportunities.

No child who is legally blind may be denied the opportunity to receive instructions in braille reading and writing on the basis that the child has the ability to read and write print.

Each student must be given an assessment which must include an evaluation of the need for braille skills to be designed by the State Department of Education, and shall include strengths and deficits. The purpose of the assessment is to determine the most appropriate reading and writing media for the individual child and does not require the use of braille if other special education services are appropriate.

Nothing in this section requires the inclusion of braille in a legally blind student's IEP.

Section 59-34-40. Instruction in braille reading and writing must be sufficient to enable each blind student to communicate effectively and efficiently with the same level of proficiency expected of the student's peers of comparable ability and grade level. The student's individualized education program must specify:

- (1) the results obtained from the assessment required pursuant to Section 59-34-30;
- (2) how braille will be implemented as the primary mode for learning through integration with other classroom activities;
- (3) the date on which braille instruction will commence;
- (4) the length of the period of instruction and the frequency and duration of each instructional session;
- (5) the level of competency in braille reading and writing to be achieved by the end of the period and the objective assessment measures to be used; and
- (6) if a decision has been made pursuant to the assessment that braille instruction or use is not required for the student then a specification of the evidence used to determine that the absence of braille instruction or use will not impair the student's ability to read and write effectively."

Benefits of Braille Instruction for Students With Low Vision

Abraham Nemeth has described braille as having "... liberated a whole class of people from a condition of illiteracy and dependency and has given them the means for self-fulfillment and enrichment. Braille makes it possible for a blind person to assume a role of equitability in modern society, and it can unlock the potential within him to become a contributing member of his community on par with his sighted fellows." (Schroeder, 1989)

The Blind Person's Literacy Rights and Education Act is intended to assure that the opportunity for braille instruction is available to students, even if they have the ability to read print. Braille instruction should be considered for every student served in a program for students with visual impairment, as it is appropriate for many students with low vision, as well as, for the students who are totally blind.

Students must have the opportunity to determine if braille may be an efficient means to accomplish some, if not all, literacy tasks. Without an opportunity to learn this valuable skill, students cannot make an informed decision relative to the use of braille to meet current or future needs.

Many students find braille an efficient means for self communication.

Handwritten messages are of little use if an individual cannot read them later.

Braille may be useful for recording phone numbers, labeling files and household items and for outlining oral presentations. The posture that a student may have to assume to read his or her own handwritten notes may not only be uncomfortable, but will look awkward and detract from a presentation, in comparison with the poise of an effective speaker reading from braille notes.

The ability to do word processing in braille, to edit braille text accurately and to convert it to hard copy represents one of the most significant advances in communication available to blind persons in this century. (Spungin, 1989)

"Braille has been proven time and time again to be the way to literacy for blind people. It can be produced, now, more cheaply than ever before in history. With braille and the other skills of blindness, we as blind people can fulfill our potential and take our true place as contributing, participating, taxpaying members of society." (Schroeder, 1989)

As consideration is given to the most appropriate literacy media for each individual student, the teacher must keep in mind the benefits of braille as a viable literacy means and approach the assessment task with concern for the student's current academic needs and future independence.

Contributors

Dr. Julia Ashley Ms. Beulah Flynn - Brazzel Mr. Parnell Diggs South Carolina Assessment for Determining Appropriate Literacy Media and for Evaluating Braille Skills

Administration Manual

Introduction

This document was developed to assist teachers, parents, administrators and students to determine the most appropriate literacy media and to evaluate braille skills. The elements to be addressed in this assessment are based on the consensus of the Task Force relative to the factors that the members deemed appropriate to consider in determining literacy media and for evaluating braille skills.

The assessment contains three sections: 1) administration directions; 2) the protocol or report form; and 3) observation forms and checklists.

The administration manual provides instructions for completion of each section of the protocol. The essential elements to be addressed are bolded in each section.

The protocol is to be used to summarize information gathered from interviews, review of records, observations and checklists. The completed protocol will be the focus of the discussion of the multidisciplinary team as it makes decisions relative to appropriate literacy media and evaluation of braille skills. This protocol does not yield a score; it is a systematic means of reviewing data collected by the parents and teachers and when appropriate, the student, relative to reading and writing media and braille skills.

A series of observation forms and checklists are appended to the protocol. These are to be used to systematically collect observation data relative to the student's tactual and visual skills. Not all forms or checklists are appropriate to be used with each student. The teacher must exercise professional judgment in determining the appropriate checklist to use, based on the age and experience of the student.

It is important to emphasize that this assessment is to be conducted by a multidisciplinary team. The team includes the ophthalmologist or optometrist, teacher of the visually impaired, regular teacher, school administrator, parent and student, when appropriate. It may include an occupational therapist, physical therapist, orientation and mobility specialist, speech therapist, low vision clinician, psychologist or other individual working with the student.

Although all team members may not participate in a meeting, their input must be included in the decision making process. For example, the ophthalmologist or optometrist may not attend the team meeting, but the information from the report is essential to the assessment process. An individual with the ability to represent the information contained in the eye examination report must be in attendance. It should be noted that not all parts of this protocol are appropriate for every student at initial evaluation or at reevaluation.

The teacher should use professional judgment in completing the assessment, drawing from existing data relative to academic achievement or developmental level of the student, as well as, medical information. For example, a student with established literacy skills would not be assessed relative to prerequisite reading skills. If the braille skills assessment indicates that the student is demonstrating acceptable reading and writing skills, the re-evaluation may focus on braille notetaking skills, slate and stylus proficiency or on auditory or technology skills as complimentary literacy tools.

Information gathered through the evaluation will be useful to the individuals planning for and instructing the student. If the goal is literacy, then braille cannot be taught in isolation, it must correspond to the student's total educational program.

It is important to monitor the student's progress in achievement of literacy media and adjust the focus when appropriate. Keep in mind that for pre-readers and beginning readers, the activity is reading regardless of the media and that the basic concepts for teaching reading apply.

The task is somewhat different for low vision students who have prerequisite reading skills, but are moving from print to braille in order to have a more efficient means to access information or to supplement print access. These students will need specific instruction in tactual discrimination and in the braille code.

The evaluator should approach the assessment task with a good understanding of the benefits of braille as a literacy tool. After careful consideration of the factors addressed in the assessment, the decision relative to appropriate reading and writing media should be made. For some students both braille and

print instruction will be appropriate, for other students, the results will clearly lead to a focus in instruction in braille or print. Even when it appears that one media may be more efficient than another, consideration should be given to alternate media to provide students with opportunities to gain skills that they may need as they transition to higher education or the world of work.

Procedural Guidelines

The South Carolina Assessment for Determining Appropriate Literacy Media and Evaluating Braille Skills was developed to provide teachers with a means for organizing the information which has been determined by the Task Force as critical to making this determination.

The assessment serves as the basis for determining initial literacy media, and the need for braille instruction, and provides information relative to literacy media that will meet both current and future needs. The document is also intended to assist with instructional planning relative to present levels of performance and IEP goals and objectives.

Assessment is required at initial evaluation for students entering a program for students with visual disabilities and at any time teachers, parents or the student feel that it would be appropriate.

Additionally, each student, currently, served with an IEP must be assessed at the next scheduled three year re-evaluation, or earlier, if the parents, teacher or student feel that it would be appropriate.

The certificated teacher of students who are visually impaired is the school official who is responsible for gathering the information and signing the protocol as the evaluator. Throughout this document, the term evaluator will be used to specify the responsible party for collecting the information and developing the written assessment report, although many individuals may contribute information from their reports and observations. The evaluator must be a teacher certificated or permitted in the area of visual impairment. The completed protocol is to remain in the student folder as documentation that the assessment has been conducted.

Demographic Information

The demographic section allows space for identification information.

Comprehensive information relative to parents' names, address, telephone number, etc., is generally collected in a social history and through intake procedures. This information is readily available in the student's school records, and it is not necessary to list the information again on the assessment document.

The examiner is encouraged to expand the demographic section to include additional information, if he or she feels a need for more comprehensive demographic data.

Medical Information

Prior to conducting the assessment, the team must have on file a comprehensive eye examination report to verify that the student meets the visual criteria of legal blindness. The report from a licensed ophthalmologist or optometrist must include: the etiology, diagnosis, prognosis, and acuity. The eye report should be current (within the last year) to be of significant value.

For the purpose of this assessment, it is recommended that specific information pertinent to determining reading and writing skills be summarized. The prognosis, whether or not the condition is stable, is a critical element for this purpose. Additionally, it is very important to consider information relative to visual fields, and scotomas or blind spots, that might effect ability to read and write.

Although the ophthalmologist or optometrist may not attend the team meeting, he or she is an essential member of the team and the findings relative to the eye condition and prognosis are to be included in the assessment report and discussed during the meeting.

Other **medical reports**, if available, should be reviewed to determine if the student has a medical condition that would effect selection of reading and writing media, such as diabetes, cerebral palsy, etc. If medical factors are determined to be relevant to the decision on appropriate literacy media, these should be summarized in this section.

If the student has been evaluated in a low vision clinic, the results from the clinical low vision evaluation should be summarized. This is especially important if the child is routinely using a low vision aid. The aid and its use should be described. Although a clinical low vision evaluation is not required, it is recommended for students with eye conditions which may respond to optical low vision aids.

Educational Information

A functional vision assessment must be administered prior to assessment of reading and writing media. The only exception is for students with bilateral prosthesis or bilateral anophthalmia. Space is allowed in this section for a brief summary of results as they relate to selection of reading and writing media, e.g. acuity at near point, specifically student's working distance from objects and/or print. The <u>South Carolina Functional Vision Assessment</u> is recommended for this purpose, however, results from any comprehensive functional vision assessment may be considered. The complete functional vision assessment report, including medical information, visual response and recommendations, should be maintained in the student record and is the basis for this summary.

Review the results of previous functional vision assessments, with current information. If a decrease in visual function is noted, this would be a significant implication relative to selecting appropriate literacy media or recommending a change in the current media. It is also important to consider the demands of the academic setting. The variable may be an increase in the visual demands and the student's ability to meet the demands with the current reading media, rather than, an actual decrease in visual acuity. It is very important to consider, not only the demands of the current curriculum, but future demands, as well. An important aspect of the evaluation is to anticipate future needs. For example, a student in kindergarten may be using visual clues to perform tasks successfully, but the demands of the curriculum in elementary school may suggest that braille will be more efficient as the primary literacy medium for future needs.

If there is evidence (e.g. a psychological report or other indicator) of an additional disability that may effect choice of literacy media, it should be indicated in this section. Documented learning disability, mental disability or hearing loss are some examples of secondary disabilities that may effect the decision regarding learning media or indicate if the student has the cognitive ability to master reading and writing in any media.

A significant area to consider in this section is the student's current academic or developmental level. The teacher should review performance

on achievement tests, class work, and grades and conduct an interview with the class room teacher and other school staff. If the student's performance is not

commensurate with ability or with that of peers, careful consideration should be given to the current literacy media relative to the impact on student achievement.

For students enrolled in a functional curriculum, a review of their performance using an ecological inventory in various domains such as self-help, social/emotional, etc., may be useful, particularly in identifying the level of literacy that they can be expected to achieve. For very young students, the results of a developmental assessment should provide information relative to readiness for learning to read.

Note any change in academic performance since previous assessments or even during the school year as this may be an indicator that the current literacy media is not appropriate.

Parent Interview

The Parent Interview Guide, *Appendix A*, was drawn from guidelines developed by a group of parents who served on the Advisory Panel which developed the <u>Maryland Guidelines for Selection of Reading and Writing Media for Students with Visual Impairments</u>. This document was developed into an interview guide by the parent members of the South Carolina Task Force.

It is very important to use this guide, correctly, to elicit valuable information regarding the student's performance at home. It is useful in gaining insights about parents' expectations of their students and their attitudes toward various reading and writing media.

The guide should **never** be presented as a form to be completed by parents or other caregivers. *Appendix A* is to be used strictly as an interview guide. Much of the information can be elicited through an interview and recorded later. The interview may be conducted by phone, however, it is preferable to meet with the parents or caregivers in the home or school, whenever possible. The IEP meeting, if the parent is in attendance, may provide an opportunity to gather some information relative to the parent's perception of the student's function and future needs.

Not all questions are appropriate for all students or families. This is a guide to the kinds of information that may be helpful to elicit from parents or caregivers. The interviewer must be thoroughly familiar with the content of the interview guide and conduct the interview with respect for parents needs, concerns and expectations. This can be a lengthy process and adequate time should be allowed. If the parent refuses to discuss any of these issues with the teacher, this should be documented.

Parent and student attitudes toward literacy media are critical factors to consider. A negative attitude toward braille indicates that the teacher must assist the parent and student to understand the benefits of braille as a literacy media in order to ensure the success of the instruction.

This interview guide may also be used with older students and can provide much information regarding the student's perception of his or her functional abilities and future needs.

Near Task Approach

The purpose of this section is to gather information through a series of observations regarding the student's use of **sensory channels** and use of vision in completing **tasks at near point**. The evaluator should also assess the student's use of devices or modifications to determine the effectiveness of these aids in activities requiring use of near vision.

The Sensory Observation Form, the Near Task Skills Observation Form and the Use of Devices or Modifications Check List are included in the appendices and are to be used to collect information relative to use of sensory channels and near task approach, as appropriate. See *Appendices B, C and D* for the forms.

For <u>each</u> appropriate type of observation: sensory channel, and/or approach to near tasks, a minimum of three observation forms must be completed in a variety of settings. The number of activities observed per setting is dependent on the level and ability of the child. The evaluator should summarize the results of the observations on the Protocol and consider the results in determining the appropriate literacy media.

It is recommended that the evaluator request that various team members including: the orientation and mobility specialist, occupational therapist, physical therapist, regular teacher and parents conduct observations. The evaluator/teacher of visually impaired must also conduct observations of sensory channels and observations of near task approach in a variety of settings such as home, classroom and playground. The evaluator is responsible for collecting and summarizing the results of the observations completed by other members of the team. The observations should focus on use of sensory channels and approach to tasks conducted at near point as they relate to pre-reading and reading activities.

If a student uses devices or modifications to read print, the Use of Devices and Modifications Checklist should also be completed. Special attention should be given to the portability of the device and frequency of use. It is also important to note if the student can use the device independently. This provides indicators relative to the functionality of the device. For example, a student who relies on a Closed Circuit Television (CCTV), daily, for all work and who cannot adjust the device without assistance may be reading print, but the portability and reading speed may indicate that it is not an efficient accommodation.

In some instances, it may be necessary to consider whether the student has had sufficient tactual or visual opportunities. If it is determined that performance is affected by lack of opportunity for tactual or visual exploration or approach, the teacher should provide opportunity and instruction and then conduct the observations.

The team could decide to include instruction in use of tactual skills in the IEP goals and objectives. The assessment would then be ongoing and the decision relative to appropriate literacy media would be made according to the schedule designated in the IEP. This is to be noted in the summary.

Tactual Perceptual Skills

Each student should be evaluated relative to tactual skills. This information may be gathered as part of the sensory channel observation, but additional opportunities to tactually examine objects, two dimensional representations and braille symbols should be provided. See *Appendix E* for a checklist of tactual activities and skills that should be addressed. This information should be helpful in determining the student's tactual readiness for braille instruction. If the student has not had an opportunity for experience with tactual exploration, provide instruction and experiences and reassess.

The evaluator will need to collect and develop materials for use in this portion of the assessment. These include feely bags, textured materials, form boards and tactile and raised line drawings. The braille worksheets from the <u>Braille Requisite Skills</u>

<u>Assessment</u> and the <u>Mangold Developmental Program of Tactile Perception and Braille Recognition</u> may be used for some of the assessment activities. Some of the observations relative to identification and discrimination of braille letters are self explanatory and the teacher can easily produce these worksheets with a braille writer.

The evaluator should occlude vision for students with low vision to ensure that the student performs tasks tactually. This can be done by having the student manipulate the objects or braille materials in a box or the teacher may use a collar, screen or ledge to occlude the material, not the student's eyes. The use of the blindfold is not recommended, as it may encourage the student to focus on the blindfold, rather than the task. If this is treated like a game, the experience will be enjoyable for the student, encourage positive attitudes about tactual learning and provide the teacher with valuable information about the student's tactual skills.

The student's developmental level and readiness skills will determine at what point in the observation to begin and how much of the observation to complete.

Note: in-depth assessment of tactual and braille skills may be obtained by using the Braille Requisite Skills Inventory and/or the Mangold Developmental Program of Tactile Perception and Braille Letter Recognition Assessment or the Tactual Boehm Test of Basic Concepts. These assessments may be substituted for the Tactual Perceptual Skills Observation and the results indicated in the summary. NOTE: This observation is not appropriate for students with established braille literacy skills.

Prerequisite Reading Skills

In addition to considering the functional ability to use print or tactual media, it is important to consider the student's conceptual and developmental level with respect to reading. For students with multiple disabilities, this observation may provide guidance regarding areas to address in an effort to encourage reading readiness and to determine if reading skills are to be more functional than literary. The Learning Media Assessment: a Resource Guide for Teachers by Koenig and Holbrook contains a comprehensive section on evaluating students with multiple disabilities.

The evaluator should consider the items found in the checklist, *Indicators* of *When to Select an Initial Reading Medium*, *Appendix F*, in determining readiness for reading instruction. Additionally, listed below are some recommended activities to observe in considering readiness for beginning a literacy program. These are offered as suggested activities to consider for both approach to task and working distance.

They are considered important skills to assess by experienced teachers of preschool visually impaired students in South Carolina. The activities are not necessarily listed sequentially.

Suggested activities include, but should not be limited to, the following:

manipulating objects with many moving parts
manipulating blocks
stacking blocks
putting shapes in pegboards and form boards
exploring new objects
exploring new environments
exploring books and pictures
attending to TV or videos
stacking rings on a peg
scribbling with crayons
rolling patting play dough
pulling apart and putting together snap toys
completing non interlocking puzzle

The Compensatory section of the <u>Oregon Project</u> lists a number of readiness skills for very young students that may provide information relative to readiness for selection of reading media. The results may be included in the protocol.

Again, it is very important to consider whether the child has had the opportunity to experience activities tactually or visually. This consideration may indicate the need for instruction and ongoing assessment.

For students without established literacy skills, this observation may be the final component of the assessment. The results should lead to recommendations for developing pre-reading and readiness skills.

For students with established reading skills in print and/or braille, the evaluator should omit this section and complete the Reading Behavior Assessment portion of the protocol.

Reading Behavior for Students with Established Literacy Skills

The Blind Persons' Literacy Rights Act specifies that "...no student who is legally blind shall be denied the opportunity to receive braille instruction on the basis that the student has the ability to read print". The purpose of this section of the protocol is to ensure that students who are reading print are assessed to determine if this is an efficient literacy medium and to determine the need for braille instruction.

For braille readers, this section provides information concerning reading rate and comprehension that will be useful in developing goals and objectives relative to how braille will be implemented as the primary mode for learning through integration with other classroom activities.

The protocol provides a space to report the results of a reading assessment.

Appendix G provides a guide for conducting the reading assessments in both braille and print and for recording the data. It is important to assess both comprehension and reading rate. The interaction of these factors provides indicators of reading efficiency.

To assess reading rate, select at least two comparable passages at the student's instructional level in the student's current reading media. To assess comprehension, select parallel passages from a published inventory with at least four comprehension questions per passage.

Prior to conducting the reading assessment, prepare materials in all media that will be needed. Braille readers should be assessed with regular braille paper, braillon or thermoform paper and computer paper to determine if the grade of paper or texture of braille cells significantly effects reading rate, comprehension, accuracy or other factors.

Print readers should be assessed with regular print, and a low vision aid, and with large type to determine the affect of size of print on the student's reading ability. Provide print readers with the opportunity to read materials with different **fonts**, **spacing** and **contrast** to determine the effect of spacing or contrast on reading ability.

In considering rate and comprehension, compare the results with students of similar ability. For print readers the following guidelines may be helpful:

Grade Level	Minimum Oral Reading Rates	Typical Silent Reading Rates
1	60	<81
2	70	82-108
3	80	109-130
4	90	131-147
5		148-161
6		162-174
7		175-185
8		186-197
9		198-209
10		210-224
11		225-240
12		241-255
College		256-333+

This table is reprinted with permission of the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired, Koenig and Holbrook, 1992.

A print reading rate of at least 60 words per minute might be considered acceptable for a student working at a first grade level. If a fourth of fifth grade student is still reading 60 words per minute and is not demonstrating increases in reading rates, the student will have difficulty keeping up with peers of comparable ability. The average reading speed of adult braille readers is about 115 words per minute (Mangold and Mangold, 1989).

Discrepancies between the reading rate of the student and sighted peers should be considered in making decisions relative to appropriate reading and writing media.

The evaluator should indicate whether the student is keeping up with peers in quantity and quality of work. It may be necessary to involve the regular class room teacher in this portion of the evaluation. It is important to consider whether the student's current reading media requires modifications or accommodations to the curriculum.

If it is determined that the student is reading large print at a much slower rate than peers, and that the amount of material will be increasing as the student moves through grades, it is important to consider whether the current media is efficient, now, or will be efficient in the future.

In considering whether the student's reading skill is progressing, review previous assessment results to determine whether the student's reading rate has increased over time or has stabilized far below the average for students of comparable ability.

These factors must be considered by the team as it makes decisions about appropriate reading media.

It is important to consider the effect of fatigue on the student. Though difficult to quantify, it is possible to observe signs of fatigue and the effect. Observe the student at various times during the day to obtain information on how fatigue is effecting performance and motivation. Although the student may not complain, observable signs such as rubbing eyes, head, frequent postural change, putting head on table, or covering one eye may indicate that the task is fatiguing.

To determine the effect of fatigue on performance, reading assessments should be conducted both at the beginning of the day and at the end of the day. Also it may be helpful to record whether there is a significant decrease in oral reading rate in the last ten (10) minutes of the reading sample from the first ten minutes.

The evaluator should carefully consider information gathered through the reading assessment along with information collected in the other sections of the assessment to determine if the student's mode of reading is efficient and meets current and future needs. The answer to this question will assist the team in determining if the student should continue in the current media, or should receive instruction in braille or print as the primary reading media or as a supplemental media, or if the student should receive instruction in both braille and print.

For more in-depth information on conducting reading assessments, refer to Learning Media Assessment: A Resource Guide for Teachers by Koenig and Holbrook available from the Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired and Communication Skills for Visually Impaired Learners by Harley, Truan and Sanford.

Written Communication

To be truly literate the student must have a system of written communication for use with self and others. Although handwriting may never be very neat for visually impaired students, it must be legible, at least to the student, after it is written. To be an efficient means of communication with others, it must be legible enough for others to decipher easily.

The checklist Written Communication for Students with Established Literacy Skills, Appendix H is to be used to collect information relative to the student's ability to use written communication. Observe student's posture when writing and review samples of handwriting for determination of efficiency. Note whether amount of time student needs to write is commensurate with expectations of sighted peers.

To be literate, whether in print or braille, an individual must be able to sign his or her own name to letters and other documents. Visually impaired students should be able to sign their names legibly by the fourth or fifth grade.

Braille Skills

The Blind Persons' Literacy Rights Act specifies that "...while braille instruction is not required, it is presumed that braille reading and writing are valuable skills to be considered for each legally blind student's transition toward continuing in higher education and in broadening job and career opportunities". The purpose of this portion of the protocol is to determine the student's braille skills including strengths and weaknesses. The areas to be addressed may include: readiness for braille instruction, knowledge of the braille code, (contractions, punctuation, whole word signs, etc.), mechanics of braille writing or braille reading ability. The components to be addressed are dependent on the student's current situation, whether preschool student, beginning braille reader, or proficient braille reader.

It is recommended that the evaluator select from one of the formal or criterion referenced assessments in *Braille Skills Assessment Instruments, Appendix I*, or develop an assessment relative to specific braille skills to be assessed, depending on the age and ability level of the student.

It is important to keep in mind that knowledge of the braille code and reading ability in braille may be very different. Both measures should be administered in determining present level of performance relative to braille skills.

This portion of the assessment is required at the initial evaluation and routine three year reevaluation. It may also be used for annual reassessment to develop goals for how braille will be implemented as the primary mode for learning through integration with other classroom activities. It should be noted that for some students, braille may be implemented as a secondary mode for learning, as well.

Other Communication Tools

In this section of the protocol, other means of communication such as auditory and technology based modes are addressed. In addition to written (braille or print) communication skills, students need a variety of skills to access and transmit information. These include, but are not limited to, use of the tape recorder to take notes, and to listen to auditory editions of texts and other books, the use of live readers, the use of computers with various out-put devices including auditory, print and braille.

Students should be assessed with both live readers and taped material. This can be a criterion referenced assessment or, the teacher can review test scores and class work completed, orally, with and without the aid of the tape recorder.

Technology is a key to making information readily accessible in a variety of formats. One of the major reasons that young students with visual impairments must have good literacy skills is to enable them to realize the opportunities that technology affords. Keyboarding is a critical skill for visually impaired students to have.

If the assessment reveals that the student is not utilizing other literacy tools (Koenig, 1992), this may be an area to begin addressing with IEP goals and objectives.

Recommendations

The recommendations are to be made by the team based on the review of the results of the various sections of this protocol. If the results are inconclusive, the team may recommend that the evaluator/teacher provide instruction in tactual or visual skills and set a date for reassessment. It is very possible that some low vision students may benefit from braille and print instruction, simultaneously.

It is important to remember that this assessment document does not yield a score, but is designed to provide a systematic means of considering a student's current abilities and future needs and determining the appropriate medium or media that will prepare the student to exit the educational system with literacy skills necessary for success in higher education and/or employment.

Braille and print media are equally efficient literacy media and should be considered simultaneously throughout the assessment process. In some instances, the results may clearly indicate that one media is more efficient for a particular student than the other. In other cases, the results may indicate that both media are appropriate or that braille supplemented with print or print supplemented with braille are more appropriate to an individual student's needs. The results may be inconclusive, indicating that the teacher should engage in diagnostic teaching in both tactual and visual skills and continue to assess the student's progress.

As portions of this assessment may be completed over time, space is allowed for initiation and completion dates. Additionally, the evaluator is to indicate if this is an initial evaluation or reevaluation. For some students, it may be necessary to conduct the assessment over a period of time before specific conclusions can be drawn.

Summary

It is not possible to include every possible element important to the decision relative to reading media in an assessment instrument. This document provides checklists and a reporting format to assist teachers of the visually impaired in collecting data and in organizing it in a systematic way to assist the team with the decision making process. The elements considered were selected based on legislative requirement, the recommendations of the Task Force and input from the field test. All portions of the protocol are not appropriate for all students.

There are many intangible factors such as student motivation, teacher enthusiasm and others which must be considered. Teachers are encouraged to add assessment elements that they consider important to the decision making process. This document is the framework for facilitating the process which must be based on diagnostic teaching and which should be ongoing.

The lack of a teacher knowledgeable about braille instruction can never be a factor which influences the decision relative to the selection of appropriate literacy media.

South Carolina Assessment for Determining Appropriate Literacy Media and for Evaluating Braille Skills

Protocol

SOUTH CAROLINA ASSESSMENT FOR DETERMINING APPROPRIATE LITERACY MEDIA AND FOR EVALUATING BRAILLE SKILLS

Student	Age			
School	Grade/Placement			
Evaluator	Position			
Date	Initial Reevaluation			
MEDICAL INFORMATION				
Describe information contained in the comprehensive eye examination report that is relevant to the determination of literacy media.				
Describe information from other medical report determining literacy.	orts that should be considered in			
Describe information from a clinical low vision aids, that would be relevant to determination	_			

EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION

Describe any change in visual functioning since previous assessment. Describe any additional disability that may have an effect on the choice of literacy media. Summarize academic/developmental abilities relative to literacy media (grades, results of criterion referenced tests, observations, achievement tests, developmental assessments, ecological inventories, etc.). Describe any changes since previous assessment, if appropriate.
Describe any additional disability that may have an effect on the choice of literacy media. Summarize academic/developmental abilities relative to literacy media (grades, results of criterion referenced tests, observations, achievement tests, developmental assessments, ecological inventories, etc.). Describe any changes since previous
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PARENT INTERVIEW Conduct the parent/student interview; (Appendix A) may be used as a guide for collecting information. Briefly summarize information relative to parent's perception of student's literacy needs. Name of person(s) Interviewed: Relationship: _____ Date of Interview: ____ **NEAR TASK APPROACH** Conduct Sensory Channel Observation (Appendix B) and Near Task Skills Observation (Appendix C). Complete Modifications/Devices Checklist, (Appendix D), if appropriate. Summarize results of Sensory Channel Observation. Summarize information or approach to tasks observation. Include information on working distance and conditions (lighting, size of object or print and whether the student approached task independently or with assistance).

Summarize the use of modifications and devices. Indicate whether student uses any devices and if yes, indicate if used independently or with assistance and if device or modification is portable.

TACTUAL/PERCEPTUAL SKILLS

Conduct Tactual/Perceptual Skills Observation (Appendix E). Briefly summarize student's tactual/perceptual skills as they relate to determination of literacy media. This
observation is not required for students with established braille literacy skills and may not be appropriate for students with documented efficiency in print literacy.
not be appropriate for students with documented emoleticy in print illeracy.
PRE-REQUISITE READING SKILLS
Conduct Indicators Of When To Select Initial Literacy Medium Checklist (Appendix F) Summarize results
Student has pre-requisite skills necessary for reading.
Selection of reading media is not appropriate at this time.
Student does not demonstrate skills required for literacy.
Student has not had sufficient opportunity to develop readiness skills. Goals and objectives will be developed and student will be reassessed.
Specify date for reassessment
READING BEHAVIOR FOR STUDENTS WITH
ESTABLISHED LITERACY SKILLS
Conduct reading behavior assessment of all appropriate media with the Reading Behavior Checklist (Appendix G) and briefly summarize the results.

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION FOR STUDENTS WITH ESTABLISHED LITERACY MEDIA

OTHER COMMUNICATION TOOLS

	ery Skills e auditory means studer	nt uses to	access information:	
	Taped tests Readers		Taped lectures Taped books	
			ry literacy medium: (use informa ssments relative to speed and c	
Justify	if auditory skills are prin	nary litera	cy medium.	J.
Note T	aking Skills			
Indicate	e means student uses fo	r note tak	king:	
	Slate and Stylus Electronic Note Taker Computer		Tape recorder Readers Pencil or pen Other	
***************************************	ents: ology Skills e if student uses any of t	the followi	ing to access devices:	
	Computer		Speech output	
	Portable reader Keyboard/Typewriter Other		Large Print output Braille output Adaptive keyboard Speech input Specify proficiency leve Describe	el

RECOMMENDATIONS Student demonstrates skills required to develop literacy media skills at this time: ☐ No, indicate date for reassessment _____ ☐ Yes, specify appropriate media: Braille Braille supplemented with print Print supplemented with braille Describe: Other____ Additional Access Concerns (Does student have requisite access skills for current and future needs?) Comments:

South Carolina Assessment for Determining Appropriate Literacy Media and for Evaluating Braille Skills

Appendices

Appendix A

PARENT INTERVIEW GUIDE

Student	
Respondent	Relation
Interviewer	Date
function in the home a to the most appropriat older student. The tea in an interview sessi c	to be used to elicit information relative to the student's and other settings in order to assist in the decision relative elearning media. This survey can also be used with an other of the visually impaired should gather this information on. The interviewer must demonstrate sensitivity relative his of each student and family as the questionnaire is
Medical Information	
Describe your child's eye	problem.
Does anyone else in the If yes, please indicate:	family have the same eye problem?
Does anyone in the famil other access devices?	y use braille? large print?
Have you noticed any ch please describe:	anges, recently, in how your child uses his/her vision? If yes,
Functional Vision Inforr	nation
How close does your chil	d get to books or other activities requiring near vision?

How close does your child hold toys or other objects when playing? How close does your child sit to the television set? Does your child listen to, rather than watch television? Does your child take materials to a special place in the house to read or perform near vision tasks? If yes, describe lighting: Do you notice your child squinting, tilting head or getting in some unusual position to read or perform near tasks? If yes, please describe: Does your child complain of frequent headaches, eye fatigue, or other physical discomforts when reading or doing near vision tasks? If yes, please describe. How long can your child engage in near vision tasks before this occurs? Do you notice a difference in your child's function according to the time of the day, (cloudy day versus sunny day) or when going from a dark room to the outdoors or from a brightly lit place into a dark room? If yes describe: Reading Factors

Does your child, primarily, examine objects visually or tactually or both?

Describe toys your child prefers to play with:
Does your child play appropriately with these toys?
Does your child seem to respond to certain colors more than others? If yes, what colors?
Can your child identify colors?
Does your child select books from home shelves or the library, and if so, comment on how he or she makes selections?
Does your child show interest in books and pictures?
Does your child have difficulty with interpreting pictures and maps?
Does your child seem to find pictures and maps frustrating?
Does your child ask for help with maps and pictures, or does he/she ignore them?
Does your child have difficulty with spelling and punctuation?
Do you read homework and other school assignments to your child? Frequently? Occasionally?
How much time does your child spend on homework each evening?

Is this commensurate with other students of comparable age or grade level and ability?				
Handwriting				
Does your child demonstrate interest in using crayons, markers or pencils?				

Can your child read back his or her own handwriting after time has passed (a few days or weeks?)

Can you read your child's handwriting?

Aids and Devices

Does your child use any low vision devices at home? If yes, please describe.

Does your child use any assertive technology in the home? If yes, please describe.

Psychosocial

Does your child have responsibilities at home such as chores or care of younger siblings?

Describe:

Does your child participate in games such as cards, checkers, etc. with siblings or other children?

Has your child participated in camp programs or other activities with other visually impaired children?

Does your child pretend to "see" to please others?
Describe your plans for the future or for your child's future.
What skills will your child need to accomplish this?
Describe any other concerns or priorities that you have for your child.
Interviewer Summary:

Acknowledgment is given to <u>Selection of Reading and Writing Media for Students With Visual Impairments</u>, A Resource Document, June, 1992 Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Special Education

SENSORY CHANNELS OBSERVATION FORM

Position			
Observation	#		
Activity			
ensory channel that at V = visual chann	was primari el, T = tact	ly used and a cil ual channel, and	rcle around all d A = auditory
Ser	sory Ch	annel	
Visual	Tactual	Auditory	
V	Т	A	
V	Т	A	
V	Т	A	
V	Т	A	
V	Т	Α	
V	Т	A	
V	Т	A	

	Observation Activity ider all of the sensor ensory channel that at V = visual chann uld be conducted for V V V V V V	Activity	sider all of the sensory channels the student used ensory channel that was primarily used and a circulat V = visual channel, T = tactual channel, and uld be conducted for at least 10-15 minutes easy. Sensory Channel Visual Tactual Auditory V T A V T A V T A V T A V T A V T A

Reprinted with permission from Koenig and Holbrook, 1992, <u>Learning Media Assessment: Guidelines for Teachers</u>, Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

NEAR TASK SKILLS OBSERVATION FORM

Student	
Observer	Position
Date	Observation #
Setting	Activity
Cetting	/ tourky
Directions: Observe student in a	variety of settings in the school and/or home environment relative to

Directions: Observe student in a variety of settings in the school and/or home environment relative to approach to tasks at near point. A minimum of three (3) observations must be performed. Indicate primary approach to task. Put a box around approach that was used primarily, circle others. Record pertinent information relative to size of object, distance and conditions.

Tasks	Working Distance	Object Size	Lighting	App to Ta	roach ask		
				V	Т	Α	
				V	Т	A	
				V	Т	Α	
				V	Т	Α	
				V	T	A	
				V	Т	A	
				V	Т	A	
				V	T	Α	
				V	T	A	
				V	Т	A	
				V	Т	A	
				V	T	A	
	-						

Comments:	



DEVICES OR MODIFICATIONS CHECKLIST

Student					
Observer		Po	sition		
Date		Ob	servation #		
Setting		Ac	tivity		
Check to indicate wheth (WA) and if device or mo			owing devices indep	pendently (I) or with assis	stance
Modifications	Portable Yes/No	Used Daily	Used Occasionally	Describe Use	
CCTV					
Enlarged print					
Reduced print					
Optical low vision aid					
Reading Stand					
Bold line paper			-		
Felt tip pen					
Enhanced Lighting					
Acetate Sheets					
Other					
	<u></u>				
Comment on effect on re	eading and writing	:			
		,	,		

TACTUAL PERCEPTUAL SKILLS OBSERVATION FORM

Student	
Observer	Position
Date	Observation #
Setting	Activity

Directions: Observe the student in the activities involving tactual identification, and discrimination listed below. Place a check to the left of each task that student successfully completes. This observation should be conducted by the teacher of the visually impaired to determine the student's tactual skills. Materials should be occluded to insure that the student performs the task using tactual clues only. If student has not had sufficient opportunity for tactual exploration and discrimination, provide instruction and reassess. This observation is not required for students with established braille literacy skills.

Tasks	Comments
Identifies familiar toys, objects	
Identifies from among items with similar characteristics (own hairbrush from mother's)	
Sorts two kinds of tactually dissimilar objects (nuts from bolts)	
Explores tactual books	
Sorts two kinds of similar objects (difference may be texture or size)	
Matches textures in fabric swatches (group of 4)	
Identifies six named textures	
Matches textures (can find the same when given a choice of 2 or 3)	
Matches shapes (circle, triangle, rectangle, square, diamond)	
Identifies shapes	

Locates left and right sides of objects	
Orients self to top bottom and middle of page	
Identifies raised shapes that are the same	
Identifies raised shapes that are different	
Identifies raised line shapes that are the same	
Identifies raised line shapes that are different	
Identifies large/ small sizes on raised line drawing	
Tracks a raised line from left to right	
Tracks a raised line from top to bottom	
Identifies short and long raised lines	
Tracks line of braille cells from left to right	
Selects different configuration in row of braille cells	
Identifies braille configurations that are the same	
Locates the beginning middle and end of full length braille lines	
Tracks single spaced line of the "for" sign configuration from left to right	
Locates one grossly different configuration in a double spaced, horizontal row of five configurations such as "for" sign in a row with four letter "I" configurations	
Locates one moderately different configuration in a double spaced horizontal row of five configurations such as "d" in a row with four "I" configurations.	

INDICATORS OF WHEN TO SELECT AN INITIAL LITERACY MEDIUM

Student	
Observer	Position
Date	Observation #
Setting	Activity

Directions: This checklist may be used to assist in determining when, and for which students, a decision on the initial literacy medium should be made. Check each behavior that the student is demonstrating. As the student consistently demonstrates more of these skills, especially those toward the bottom of the list, it becomes increasingly imperative to address the initial literacy medium.

BEHAVIOR

Listens to and enjoys when others read.
Notes likenesses and differences in sounds/spoken words.
Speaks in connected sentences.
Notes likenesses and differences in familiar objects
 visually and/or tactually.
Tells a story about a recent personal event or experience.
Demonstrates interest in pictures and/or objects associated
with stories or books.
Completes sentences in a book with a repeated pattern (e.g.,
"I'll huff, and I'll puff, and"in <i>The Three Little Pigs</i>).
Relates personal experiences to characters or events in stories.
Trelates personal experiences to characters of events in stories.
Acts out or retells stories after listening to them.
Demonstrates interest in drawing or scribbling.
Scribbles (or "writes") and then "reads" back the message.
Associates signs in the home or community with important
events (e.g., the golden arches mean "time to eat").
Says the alphabet with fair accuracy.
Attempts to write his or her name.
Notes library and differences in words when presented in print or braille
Notes likenesses and differences in words when presented in print or braille.
Recognizes name or simple words in print or braille.
 recognizes name or simple words in print or braile.

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Locates sligh	tly different configuration in s such as "a" in a row of fou	r "h"		
configuration	s Locates reversed configura	ations in		
	ced horizontal row of five co			
	n row of "st" configurations			
<u> </u>	er of configurations specifie	d in a dot		
	e examiner in a horizontal do			
spaced row of	f ten grossly different config	urations		
such as four	'b" con-figurations in a row v	with six "I"		
configuration				
	configuration specified in a configuration			
by the exami	ner in a double spaced horiz	ontal row of		
	configurations.			
	letter "a" in a horizontal row			
	"for" and a space, the letter	"a" "for"		
and a space				
Identifies the	letter a in a line of five braille	e symbols		
Identifies the	latter "e" in a line of ten brei	llo symbols		
identines the	letter "a" in a line of ten brai	lie symbols		
ıgh z dependir	e repeated with letters b the g on the level of the stude al skills observation:		ers k through o,	p through u and v
ıgh z dependir	g on the level of the stude		ers k through o,	p through u and v
ıgh z dependir	g on the level of the stude		ers k through o,	p through u and v
ugh z dependir	g on the level of the stude		ers k through o,	p through u and v
ıgh z dependir	g on the level of the stude		ers k through o,	p through u and v
ıgh z dependir	g on the level of the stude		ers k through o,	p through u and v
ıgh z dependir	g on the level of the stude		ers k through o,	p through u and v
ugh z dependir	g on the level of the stude		ers k through o,	p through u and v
ugh z dependir	g on the level of the stude		ers k through o,	p through u and v
ugh z dependir	g on the level of the stude		ers k through o,	p through u and v
ugh z dependir	g on the level of the stude		ers k through o,	p through u and v
ugh z dependir	g on the level of the stude		ers k through o,	p through u and v
ugh z dependir	g on the level of the stude		ers k through o,	p through u and v
ugh z dependir	g on the level of the stude		ers k through o,	p through u and v
ugh z dependir	g on the level of the stude		ers k through o,	p through u and v

READING BEHAVIOR CHECKLIST FOR STUDENTS WITH ESTABLISHED LITERACY SKILLS

Student			
Observer		Position	
Date		Observation #	
Setting		Activity	
comparable passages a published inventory and	at the student's instructional	level. Assess reading comprehension questions per passage. Specify med	s oral reading by selecting at least two on by selecting parallel passages from a lia to be compared, if appropriate, braille,
MEDIA			
Braille	Regular Print	Print with Low Vision Aids	Large Print
Record:			
Comprehension Reading Behavior	Reading Rate	Working Distance	Endurance
Skips words Frequently los Keeps up with Rate and com Reading skill i Fatigue Factor Headaches Fatigue Backaches Tired/burning		Observable sign Squintin Excessi	
Specify			
Fonts/Spacing Comment on effect of Contrast Spacing Additional comments		iper	

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION FOR STUDENTS WITH ESTABLISHED LITERACY SKILLS

Student			
Observer			Position
Date			Observation #
Setting			Activity
	from a book or t	he board/ove	by observing student in various situations, such
Handwriting is le		fter several h	ours After several days
Handwriting is le	egible to others		
Student can write	te signature:		
With signa	ature guide	Without si	gnature guide
Speed and effic	ciency are commo	ensurate with	peers of similar ability
Skill is progressi	ing		
Quality and qua	ntity of work are	commensura	te with peers
Handwriting is a	n effective tool		
Comment on devices and	d modifications th	nat student u	ses:
Modifications	Portable Yes/No	Used Daily	Used Occasionally
CCTV			
Felt tip pens			
Bold Line paper			
Optical low vision aid			
Comment on posture stu	dent assumes wl	nen writing:	
Comment on distance stu	udent is from ma	terial:	

BRAILLE SKILLS ASSESSMENT INSTRUMENTS

The assessments listed below address both reading and writing braille skills at various levels, from readiness to use of slate and stylus, Nemeth and foreign language codes. Select from this list of assessments or develop an informal criterion referenced assessment relative to individual student needs.

CRITERION REFERENCED ASSESSMENTS

Mechanics of Braille Reading (Harley, R.K., Truman, M.B. and Sandford, L.D., 1987) Communication Skills for Visually Impaired Learners by Harley, R.R., 1987; available from Charles C. Thomas, Springfield, Illinois. (has several checklists including Mechanics of Braille Reading that teachers may use to assess braille skills).

Diagnostic Assessment of Braille Reading Skills (Rose Marie Swallow) Swallow, R., Mangold, S., Mangold, P., 1978 Informal Assessment of Developmental Skills for Visually Handicapped Students, New York, New York, American Foundation for the Blind.

Braille Writing Including Nemeth Code (Rose Marie Swallow) - Swallow, R., Mangold, S., Mangold, P., 1978 Informal Assessment of Developmental Skills for Visually Handicapped Students, New York, New York, American Foundation for the Blind.

Braille Reading Readiness Skills from the Mangold Developmental Program of Tactile Perception and Braille Letter Recognition (Sally Mangold)

Assessment of Slate Skills (Phillip Mangold) - Swallow, R., Mangold, S., Mangold, P., 1978 Informal Assessment of Developmental Skills for Visually Handicapped Students, New York, New York, American Foundation for the Blind.

FORMAL ASSESSMENTS

Basic Reading Rate Scale, Braille Edition, catalog 7-10670 (available from the American Printing House for the Blind)

Braille Unit Recognition Battery, Diagnostic Test of Grade 2 Literary Braille, (available from the American Printing House for the Blind, catalog # 7-1735

<u>Patterns Primary Braille Reading Program</u>, Posttests for each level (available from the American Printing House for the Blind)

Braille Requisite Skills Inventory (Stephanie Labossiere, Karen Rhodes) available from Education Service Center P.O. Box 863 Houston TX 77001-0863 cost \$25.00

Mangold Developmental Program of Tactile Perception and Braille Letter Recognition Reading Readiness Kit, Exceptional Teaching Aids 20102 Woodbine Avenue, Castro CA 94546

<u>Diagnostic Reading Scales: Adapted Editions</u>, Large Type and Braille Editions for evaluation of oral and silent reading, (available from the American Printing House for the Blind).

Minnesota Braille Skills Inventory, A Resource Manual; available from the Minnesota Department of Education

References

Caton, H.(ED.). (1991). *Print and braille literacy: Selecting appropriate learning media*, Louisville, Ky; American Printing House for the Blind.

Harley, R.K., Truan, M. B., Sanford, L. D. (1987). Communication skills for visually impaired learners. Springfield, II; Charles C Thomas.

Huebner, K. M. (1989) Daily uses of braille as told by four adult braille users. *Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness*, 6, 308.

Koenig, A.J. & Holbrook, M.C.(1991). Determining the reading medium for visually impaired students via diagnostic teaching. *Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness*, 85, 2, 61-68.

Koenig, A.J. & Holbrook, M.C. (1993) Learning media assessment of students with visual impairments. Austin, TX; Texas School for the Blind and Visually Impaired.

Mangold, S. S.(ED.).1982 A teachers guide to the special educational needs of blind and visually impaired children, New York, NY; American Foundation for the Blind.

Mangold, S. & Mangold, P. (1989). Selecting the most appropriate primary learning medium for students with functional vision. *Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness*, 83, 6 294-296.

Schroeder, F (1989). Literacy: The key to opportunity. *Journal of Visual Impairment and Blindness*, 83, 6, 290-293.

Spungin. Susan J. (1989) *Braille literacy*. New York, NY; American Foundation for the Blind.

South Carolina Assessment for Determining Appropriate Literacy Media and for Evaluating Braille Skills

Protocol and Checklists



SOUTH CAROLINA ASSESSMENT FOR DETERMINING APPROPRIATE LITERACY MEDIA AND FOR EVALUATING BRAILLE SKILLS

Student	Age	
School	Grade/Placement	
Evaluator	Position	
Date	Initial Reevaluation	
MEDICAL INFORMATION		
Describe information contained in the complete relevant to the determination of literacy med	·	
Describe information from other medical rep determining literacy.	orts that should be considered in	
Describe information from a clinical low visional aids, that would be relevant to determination	_	

EDUCATIONAL INFORMATION

Briefly summarize results of a Functional Vision Assessment relative to tasks at near
point.
Describe any change in visual functioning since previous assessment.
······································
Describe any additional disability that may have an effect on the choice of literacy
media.
Summarize academic/developmental abilities relative to literacy media (grades, results of criterion referenced tests, observations, achievement tests, developmental
assessments, ecological inventories, etc.). Describe any changes since previous
assessment, if appropriate.

PARENT INTERVIEW Conduct the parent/student interview; (Appendix A) may be used as a guide for

collecting information. Briefly summarize information relative to parent's perception of student's literacy needs.	
Name of person(s) Interviewed:	
Relationship: Date of Intervie	ew:
NEAR TASK APPROACH	
Conduct Sensory Channel Observation (Appendix B) and Near Ta (Appendix C). Complete Modifications/Devices Checklist, (Appendit appropriate. Summarize results of Sensory Channel Observation.	
Summarize information or approach to tasks observation. Include working distance and conditions (lighting, size of object or print an student approached task independently or with assistance).	
Summarize the use of modifications and devices. Indicate whethe devices and if yes, indicate if used independently or with assistant modification is portable.	

TACTUAL/PERCEPTUAL SKILLS

Conduct Tactual/Perceptual Skills Observation (Appendix E). Briefly summarize student's tactual/perceptual skills as they relate to determination of literacy media. This observation is not required for students with established braille literacy skills and may not be appropriate for students with documented efficiency in print literacy.	
PRE-REQUISITE READING SKILLS	
Conduct Indicators Of When To Select Initial Literacy Medium Checklist (Appendix F) Summarize results	
Student has pre-requisite skills necessary for reading.	
Selection of reading media is not appropriate at this time.	
Student does not demonstrate skills required for literacy.	
Student has not had sufficient opportunity to develop readiness skills. Goals and objectives will be developed and student will be reassessed. Specify date for reassessment	
READING BEHAVIOR FOR STUDENTS WITH ESTABLISHED LITERACY SKILLS	
Conduct reading behavior assessment of all appropriate media with the Reading Behavior Checklist (Appendix G) and briefly summarize the results.	

WRITTEN COMMUNICATION FOR STUDENTS WITH ESTABLISHED LITERACY MEDIA

Skills Checklist (Appelluix F	written communication with the Written Communication and briefly summarize the results:
Describe use of modification	ns or devices for written communication. Specify whether
	s independently or with assistance, and if the device is
V [] N- []	VACCIA- in a communication in an afficient magne of
Yes 🗆 No 🗀	Written communication is an efficient means of communication for the student.
COTOCHENT OF DOAL	
ASSESSMENT OF BRAIL	
N .	essment utilizing a formal assessment instrument (Appendix assessment to determine student's braille skills.
Assessment Instrument:	
Date of Administration:	
Summarize results:	
Summarize results: Recommendations:	
Recommendations:	ent tactual experiences or does not demonstrate readiness,
Recommendations:	ent tactual experiences or does not demonstrate readiness, cate anticipated date for reassessment.

OTHER COMMUNICATION TOOLS **Auditory Skills** Indicate auditory means student uses to access information: Taped lectures Taped tests Taped books Readers Summarize listening skills as a secondary literacy medium: (use information gathered from observation or criterion referenced assessments relative to speed and comprehension) Justify if auditory skills are primary literacy medium. **Note Taking Skills** Indicate means student uses for note taking: Tape recorder Slate and Stylus **Electronic Note Taker** Readers Computer Pencil or pen Other Comments: **Technology Skills** Indicate if student uses any of the following to access devices: Computer Speech output Large Print output Braille output Adaptive keyboard Speech input Portable reader Keyboard/Typewriter Specify proficiency level ___ Other Describe____ Comment on Communication Skills:

RECOMMENDATIONS

Student demonstrat	es skills required to develop li	teracy media skills at this time:
☐ No, indi	cate date for reassessment _	
☐ Yes, spe	ecify appropriate media:	
Prir Prir	ille supplemented with print	Describe:
Additional Access C needs?)	oncerns (Does student have i	requisite access skills for current and future
Comments:		



PARENT INTERVIEW GUIDE

Student	
Respondent	Relation
Interviewer	Date
the home and other appropriate learning teacher of the visually. The interviewer must	s to be used to elicit information relative to the student's function in settings in order to assist in the decision relative to the most media. This survey can also be used with an older student. The impaired should gather this information in an interview session demonstrate sensitivity relative to the unique strengths of each the questionnaire is completed.
Medical Information	
Describe your child's e	e problem.
Does anyone else in the lf yes, please indicate:	e family have the same eye problem?
Does anyone in the fan other access devices?	nily use braille? large print?
Have you noticed any of please describe:	hanges, recently, in how your child uses his/her vision? If yes,
Functional Vision Info	rmation
How close does your ch	nild get to books or other activities requiring near vision?
How close does your ch	nild hold toys or other objects when playing?

How close does your child sit to the television set? Does your child listen to, rather than watch television?
Does your child take materials to a special place in the house to read or perform near vision tasks? If yes, describe lighting:
Do you notice your child squinting, tilting head or getting in some unusual position to read or perform near tasks? If yes, please describe:
Does your child complain of frequent headaches, eye fatigue, or other physical discomforts when reading or doing near vision tasks? If yes, please describe.
How long can your child engage in near vision tasks before this occurs?
Do you notice a difference in your child's function according to the time of the day,(cloudy day versus sunny day) or when going from a dark room to the outdoors or from a brightly lit place into a dark room? If yes describe:
Reading Factors
Does your child, primarily, examine objects visually or tactually or both?
Describe toys your child prefers to play with:
Does your child play appropriately with these toys?
Does your child seem to respond to certain colors more than others? If yes, what colors?

Can your child identify colors?
Does your child select books from home shelves or the library, and if so, comment on how he or she makes selections?
Does your child show interest in books and pictures?
Does your child have difficulty with interpreting pictures and maps?
Does your child seem to find pictures and maps frustrating?
Does your child ask for help with maps and pictures, or does he/she ignore them?
Does your child have difficulty with spelling and punctuation?
Do you read homework and other school assignments to your child? Frequently? Occasionally?
How much time does your child spend on homework each evening?
Is this commensurate with other students of comparable age or grade level and ability?
Handwriting
Does your child demonstrate interest in using crayons, markers or pencils?
Can your child read back his or her own handwriting after time has passed (a few days or weeks?)
Can you read your child's handwriting?

Does your child use any low vision devices at home? If yes, please describe.
Does your child use any assertive technology in the home? If yes, please describe.
Psychosocial
Does your child have responsibilities at home such as chores or care of younger siblings? Describe:
Does your child participate in games such as cards, checkers, etc. with siblings or other children?
Has your child participated in camp programs or other activities with other visually impaired children?
Does your child pretend to "see" to please others?
Describe your plans for the future or for your child's future.
What skills will your child need to accomplish this?
Describe any other concerns or priorities that you have for your child.
Interviewer Summary:

Acknowledgment is given to <u>Selection of Reading and Writing Media for Students With Visual Impairments, A</u>
Resource Document, June, 1992 Maryland State Department of Education, Division of Special Education

Aids and Devices

SENSORY CHANNELS OBSERVATION FORM

Student				
Observer	Position			
Date	Observation	#		
Setting	Activity			
Directions: For each observed behavior, of the task or activity. Put a box around the other channels that were involved. Note channel. A minimum of 3 observations settings.	e sensory channel that e that V = visual chann	was primari el, T = tact	ly used and a circle arou rual channel, and A = a	und a nuditor
Observed Behavior	Ser	nsory Ch	annel	
	Visual	Tactual	Auditory	
	V	Т	A	
	V	Т	Α	
	V	Т	Α	
	V	Т	A	
	V	Т	A	
	V	Т	A	
	V	Т	A	
Comments:				
	Ibrook, 1992, <u>Learning Med</u>			

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NEAR TASK SKILLS OBSERVATION FORM

Student					-		
Observer			Position				
Date			Observation #				_
Setting			Activity				
Directions: Obser approach to tasks approach to task. information relative	at near point. A re Put a box arour	minimum of thr nd approach t	ee (3) observation hat was used p	ons must	be per	formed. India	cate primary
Tasks	Working Distance	Object Size	Lighting		roach ask		
				+	Т	A	
				V	Т	Α	
				V	Т	A	
				V	Т	A	
				V	Т	A	
				V	Т	A	
				V	T	A	
				V	Т	A	
				V	Т	A	
				V	Т	A	_
				V	Т	A	
				V	Т	A	
Comments:							



DEVICES OR MODIFICATIONS CHECKLIST

Student					
Observer		P	Position		
Date			bservation #		
Setting		A	ctivity		
Check to indicate whet (WA) and if device or m			ollowing devices indep	pendently (I) or with assist	ance
Modifications	Portable Yes/No	Used Daily	Used Occasionally	Describe Use	
CCTV					
Enlarged print					
Reduced print					
Optical low vision aid					
Reading Stand					
Bold line paper					
Felt tip pen					
Enhanced Lighting					
Acetate Sheets					
Other					
Comment on effect on re	eading and writing	J:			



TACTUAL PERCEPTUAL SKILLS OBSERVATION FORM

Student	
Observer	Position
Date	Observation #
Setting	Activity

Directions: Observe the student in the activities involving tactual identification, and discrimination listed below. Place a check to the left of each task that student successfully completes. This observation should be conducted by the teacher of the visually impaired to determine the student's tactual skills. Materials should be occluded to insure that the student performs the task using tactual clues only. If student has not had sufficient opportunity for tactual exploration and discrimination, provide instruction and reassess. This observation is not required for students with established braille literacy skills.

Tasks	Comments
Identifies familiar toys, objects	
Identifies from among items with similar characteristics (own hairbrush from mother's)	
Sorts two kinds of tactually dissimilar objects (nuts from bolts)	
Explores tactual books	
Sorts two kinds of similar objects (difference may be texture or size)	
Matches textures in fabric swatches (group of 4)	
Identifies six named textures	
Matches textures (can find the same when given a choice of 2 or 3)	
Matches shapes (circle, triangle, rectangle, square, diamond)	
Identifies shapes	

Locates left and right sides of objects
Orients self to top, bottom and middle of page
Identifies raised shapes that are the same
Identifies raised shapes that are different
Identifies raised line shapes that are the same
Identifies raised line shapes that are different
Identifies large/ small sizes on raised line drawing
Tracks a raised line from left to right
Tracks a raised line from top to bottom
Identifies short and long raised lines
Tracks line of braille cells from left to right
Selects different configuration in row of braille cells
Identifies braille configurations that are the same
Locates the beginning, middle and end of full length braille lines
Tracks single spaced line of the "for" sign configuration from left to right
Locates one grossly different configuration in a double spaced, horizontal row of five configurations such as "for" sign in a row with four letter "I" configurations
Locates one moderately different configuration in a double spaced horizontal row of five configurations such as "d" in a row with four "l" configurations.

	Locates slightly different configuration in row of five configurations such as "a" in a row of four "b"	
	configurations Locates reversed configurations in	
	a double spaced horizontal row of five configurations	
	such as "ch" in row of "st" configurations	
	Counts number of configurations specified in a dot	
	pattern by the examiner in a horizontal double	
	spaced row of ten grossly different configurations	
	such as four "b" con-figurations in a row with six "l"	
	configurations.	
	Locates one configuration specified in a dot pattern	
	by the examiner in a double spaced horizontal row of	
	five different configurations.	
	Identifies the letter "a" in a horizontal row with the	
	configuration "for" and a space, the letter "a" "for"	
	and a space	
	Identies the letter a in a line of five braille symbols	
	derides the letter a in a line of live braine symbols	
	Identifies the letter "a" in a line of ten braille symbols	
ugl	ary of tactual skills observation:	letters k through o, p through u and v
ugl	n z depending on the level of the student	letters k through o, p through u and v
ougl	n z depending on the level of the student	letters k through o, p through u and v
ougl	n z depending on the level of the student	letters k through o, p through u and v
ougl	n z depending on the level of the student	letters k through o, p through u and v
ougl	n z depending on the level of the student	letters k through o, p through u and v
ougl	n z depending on the level of the student	letters k through o, p through u and v
ougl	n z depending on the level of the student	letters k through o, p through u and v
ougl	n z depending on the level of the student	letters k through o, p through u and v
ougl	n z depending on the level of the student	n letters k through o, p through u and v
ougl	n z depending on the level of the student	n letters k through o, p through u and v
ougl	n z depending on the level of the student	n letters k through o, p through u and v
ougl	n z depending on the level of the student	n letters k through o, p through u and v
ougl	n z depending on the level of the student	n letters k through o, p through u and v



INDICATORS OF WHEN TO SELECT AN INITIAL LITERACY MEDIUM

F						
Student						
Observer	Position					
Date	Observation #					
Setting	Activity					
literacy medium sho	ecklist may be used to assist in determining when, and for which students, a decision on the initial ould be made. Check each behavior that the student is demonstrating. As the student consistently of these skills, especially those toward the bottom of the list, it becomes increasingly imperative to eracy medium.					
	BEHAVIOR					
Listens to	and enjoys when others read.					
Notes liker	Notes likenesses and differences in sounds/spoken words.					
Speaks in	connected sentences.					
	lesses and differences in familiar objects d/or tactually.					
	y about a recent personal event or experience.					
Demonstra	tes interest in pictures and/or objects associated					
Completes	with stories or books. Completes sentences in a book with a repeated pattern (e.g., "I'll huff, and I'll puff, and"in The Three Little Pigs).					
Relates pe	rsonal experiences to characters or events in stories.					
Acts out or	retells stories after listening to them.					
Demonstra	tes interest in drawing or scribbling.					
	or "writes") and then "reads" back the message.					
	signs in the home or community with important ., the golden arches mean "time to eat").					
Says the a	phabet with fair accuracy.					
Attempts to	write his or her name.					
Notes liken	esses and differences in words when presented in print or braille.					

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Recognizes name or simple words in print or braille.



READING BEHAVIOR CHECKLIST FOR STUDENTS WITH ESTABLISHED LITERACY SKILLS

Student						
Observer		Position				
Date		Observation #	Observation #			
Setting		Activity				
comparable passages at published inventory and	t the student's instructional le	r each appropriate medium. Assess oral evel. Assess reading comprehension by questions per passage. Specify media to print .MEDIA	selecting parallel passages from a			
Braille	Regular Print	Print with Low Vision Aids	Large Print			
Record: Comprehension Reading Behavior	Reading Rate	Working Distance	Endurance			
Skips lines Skips words Frequently los Keeps up with Rate and com Reading skill i	peers in quality of work prehension are commens	surate with ability				
Fatigue Factor	ue Factor Observable Signs of Fatigue					
Headaches Fatigue Backaches Tired/burning	eyes		ve blinking I Changes			
Specify						
Fonts/Spacing	Туре р	paper				
Comment on effect of: Contrast						
Spacing						
Additional comments of	on reading behavior:					



WRITTEN COMMUNICATION FOR STUDENTS WITH ESTABLISHED LITERACY SKILLS

Student						
Observer		Position				
Date		Observation #				
Setting		Activity				
	e taking, copyir	ng from a b	by observing student in various ook or the board/overhead, and ach behavior observed.			
Handwriting is leg	Handwriting is legible to self:Immediately After several hours After several days					
Handwriting is le	Handwriting is legible to others					
	Student can write signature:					
With signa	With signature guideWithout signature guide					
Speed and effic	Speed and efficiency are commensurate with peers of similar ability					
Skill is progressi	Skill is progressing					
Quality and quar	Quality and quantity of work are commensurate with peers					
Handwriting is a	Handwriting is an effective tool					
Comment on devices and modifications that student uses:						
Modifications	Portable Yes/No	Used Daily	Used Occasionally			
CCTV						
Felt tip pens						
Bold Line paper						
Optical low vision aid						
Comment on posture stud	dent assumes wh	nen writing:				
Comment on distance stu	dent is from mat	terial:				

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